Acquisition of aircrafts by IA

651. SHRI RAMA MUNI REDDY SIRIGIREDDY: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the Indian Airlines bid for acquiring new aircraft was expired on 31st December, 2002;

(b) if so, whether the IA has sought any intension for the bids submitted by Airbus Industries and Boeing;

(c) whether the issue of acquiring has still not been decided; and

(d) the reasons for delaying such a decision apart from national security?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) The offers from aircraft and engine manufacturers, expiring on 31st December, 2002 have been extended until 31st March, 2003.

(c) and (d) The proposal received from Indian Airlines Ltd. is under consideration in consultation with various appraising agencies like Planning Commission, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Environment etc. The proposal will be taken up for investment decision after due processes.

Operation of international flights from domestic airports

652. SHRI GHULAM NABI AZAD: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering or has formulated any scheme to operate international flights from domestic airports; and

(b) if so, what benefits are likely to be accrued to Air India and Indian Airlines as a result thereof, with details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) and (b) International flights are already operating from the domestic airports at Jaipur, Lucknow, Calicut, Coimbatore, Trichy, Gaya, Varanasi and Patna. A hub and spoke arrangement has been evolved between Air India and Indian Airlines. Under this arrangement, Indian Airlines is operating about 20 flights

between various interior airports and international airports at Mumbai and Delhi connecting various airports to International flights of Air India. These flights carry Air India flight number and the passengers can check in for their final destination from their initial boarding point. The passengers are provided with boarding cards for their onward Air India flight. Their baggage is also tagged onto their onward Air India flights. Similar arrangement has been made for incoming flights as well.

These arrangements have benefited both Air India and Indian Airlines. Indian Airlines gets good income from these operations carrying international passengers. Similarly Air India also gets good passenger load from the internal points. International passengers from internal points are also benefited from such a convenient arrangement.

Illegal entry into Indian airspace by US aircrafts

653. SHRI SHAHID SIDDIQUI: Will the Minister of CIVIL AVIATION be pleased to state:

(a) whether unidentified aircrafts made intrusion into Indian airspace in the first week of February, 2003; if so, any inquiry has been made into these incidents;

(b) whether these aircrafts belong to US Air Force; and

(c) what steps have been taken to see that no such intrusions take place in future?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CIVIL AVIATION (SHRI SHRIPAD YESSO NAIK): (a) to (c) Yes, sir. Between January 31 to February 08, 2003, Chennai Air Traffic Control (ATC) has reported 4 incidents of intrusion of unidentified aircraft into Indian airspace near Chennai airport. Though all the efforts made to establish contact with these aircraft failed, Chennai ATC continuously monitored the position of unidentified aircraft and kept informing the position to Flight Information Region, Military Liason Unit and Coast Guard authorities. The identity of these unidentified aircraft has not been established so far. The incidents are under investigation.